

**EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
MINUTES
February 5, 2008**

On Tuesday, February 5, 2008, the Edgefield County Council held its regular monthly meeting at 6:00 P. M. in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter Street, Edgefield.

Members present

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman
Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman
Norman Dorn, Councilman
Joel D. Hudson, Councilman
B. Everette Kitchens, Councilman

Others present

John W. Pettigrew, Jr., County Administrator
John F. Byrd, Jr., County Attorney
Lynn W. Strom, Finance/Budget Manager
Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council
and others as per list attached

Chairman Kneece called the meeting to order and the invocation was given by Rev. Jasper Lloyd. The Pledge of Allegiance was then recited.

Minutes

The motion to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2008, Edgefield County Council meeting, as presented, was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Kitchens. Motion carried unanimously.

Reports

No comments.

Resolutions

Motion was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Hudson, to approve Resolution No. 07-08-304, "A Resolution Designating Burton Center for Disabilities and Special Needs as an Entity in Edgefield County Providing Transportation to the Elderly or Persons with Disabilities." Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Strategic Plan for Edgefield County

John Culbertson, Edgefield County Chamber of Commerce, gave a presentation on a *Strategic Plan for Edgefield County*. The Edgefield County Chamber of Commerce and the County of Edgefield are working together on future plans for the county. After several meetings, steering committees were formed, focusing on the areas of Economic Development, Education, and Quality of Life.

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Councilman Kitchens, made a motion to support this endeavor, seconded by Councilman Bright. Motion carried unanimously.

North Tower Update

Mike Casey, EMA Director, brought to council several items regarding the state of the condition of the north tower. He presented a portion of a corroded rod that guy wires were hooked for supporting the tower. All of the areas that had corroded rods/guy wires have been completely replaced; the tower has been straightened. This is a temporary fix.

The problem is still there and the solution is to move the tower because it and all of the anchor points for the guy wires are on top of the landfill. The ground is constantly shifting and moving. One of the anchor points dropped several feet within the last few years. The tower was actually sitting on one of its three legs – two of them off of the ground. I have been informed by letter that we have about twenty four months to do something. The tower was built with a life expectancy based upon the manufacturer of somewhere around twenty five years and it is now over thirty years old.

John Riley has come down and we have made GPS shots as far as elevation and we have looked at several tracts of land that we think would be suitable, one of the sites is where EMS (Star Road) is located – county owns that property. The difference in elevation at that site and where the tower is now located, is only about twenty to twenty five feet. Twenty to twenty five feet of extra steel up in the air would make up the difference.

The necessary repairs have been made to the buildings housing equipment, but the new equipment is being placed in an old dilapidated building. Mike stated that he is checking with some companies about surplus transmitter buildings – prefabs.

Mike asked council for consideration of moving the tower and, if so, to what location. He has gone as far as he can with the old tower and at this point needs direction from council. It will take at least four to six acres of land unless county chooses to go with a free-standing tower which will be twice as much in price compared to a tower with guy wires.

Mike informed council that he has secured a second grant that will pay for equipment that he is ordering. It is a 50-50 grant. It cannot be used on the tower, but thanked Bob Ramsey for speaking with Congressman Barrett concerning a grant for this purpose. Mike will speak with the contact in Washington that Mr. Barrett spoke with. There is a new grant for the emergency operations center that is coming out in April that he and Sandy will be working on and grants for other departments such as the fire departments they will be working on.

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There is a new FEMA pilot project for debris removal in the event that the county has a disaster, such as a tornado. If the county and the state reach a certain dollar threshold and a disaster is declared an emergency by the President, then we can get pre-approved contractors (debris removal contractors) to come into Edgefield County and they will do all of the work (take it to one of our pre-determined sites & burn it). They will then apply to FEMA for reimbursement and FEMA sends us the check and we pay the vendor for his removal work. If, in the process, we generate any recyclables that can be recycled for a profit, we get to keep that money. All that is required is to have two vendors on call at no charge. There is no money involved to have them on as a retainer, so to speak, with approval (vendors) by FEMA. This will be presented to the towns also so the entire county can be covered in the event of debris removal. There is an additional five percent reimbursement from FEMA by having the plan and pre-approved vendors should we have to call the vendor (s) in.

The question posed to council by Mike: “Does council want me to pursue a grant for the re-location of the tower or put it on hold”? Motion was made by Councilman Kitchens, seconded by Councilman Bright, for Mike to continue pursuing a grant for the re-location of the North Tower. Motion carried unanimously.

Mike did inform council of the exploratory funds that he will need in the future. John Riley was good enough to come down doing a tremendous amount of leg work for a little money. We did not have to pay consulting engineers and pay \$5,000-\$6,000 feasibility studies from engineering companies which can be expensive. At some point in time, he stated that he would have to have some type of consultant to come in. He is trying to run most of this through his budget and hope the two grants will kick in for reimbursement. But, the feasibility study can be expensive.

Posting Delinquent Properties

Linda Priest, Edgefield County Tax Collector, requested of council to raise the cost that goes on the tax bills. The Tax Collector office is pretty much self sufficient and all of the costs comes from the taxpayer for the posting, mailing, etc. This will be a line item for the new budget in order to know what is coming in and what is being spent. The taxpayers are being charged the cost which Linda would like raised by \$25.00 for this new budget year. If the property goes all the way through a tax sale, charges, which were \$67.00 last year, if raised by \$25.00 would be \$92.00. The prices are put on at different times throughout the year because everything is done through restricted delivery, certified mail, plus the posting. Her office will be required this year to have digital cameras and costs can pay for all of this. If delinquent property does not go all of the way through a tax sale, the taxpayer will only be charged up to the point they pay the taxes.

Motion was made by Councilman Kitchens, seconded by Councilman Kneece to raise the

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charges to delinquent taxpayers by \$25.00. Motion carried with a vote of four yeas and Councilman Dorn opposing.

2008-09 Budget Calendar

Councilman Hudson made the motion to approve the 2008-09 proposed budget calendar, seconded by Councilman Bright. Motion carried unanimously. The calendar is a schedule of advertising, receiving budget requests, budget work sessions, etc.

Expansion of Sweetwater Convenience Center

The chairman explained that Tim Fox, Director of Solid Waste, has obtained a grant for work to be done at the Sweetwater Convenience Center that will allow space for two additional compactors which will be provided by Tri-County. This expansion will enable the site to handle the increasing traffic flow. The county's match can be in-kind contributions such as grading, site work, surface preparation and electrical work.

Before a motion was made, Councilman Hudson stated that previously he brought up the fact that a loading dock is needed that one can drive on and slide metal, washing machines, etc. over into a "bin." People are trying to toss such objects over into a dumpster and he feels that is very dangerous. Someone could be hurt in the process of doing this. Mr. Hudson would like an off-loading dock included in the motion for expansion of the Sweetwater Convenience Center.

Chairman Kneece suggested approving the grant as is and then design an off-loading dock for heavy items such as washing machines, etc.

Motion was made by Councilman Hudson, seconded by Councilman Bright, to approve the Sweetwater expansion. Motion carried unanimously.

Fuel Site

The administrator brought before council the recommendation to replace the pump rather than close the fuel site as had been discussed about a year and a half ago. Councilman Kitchens stated that he would like to review the minutes pertaining the closing versus repairing the fuel site.

The lowest price received to replace the pump is from MECO (Augusta) for \$4,265. To purchase a new pump, \$1,565 would have to come from council contingency account. There is only \$2,700 in the fuel site budget.

Motion was made by Councilman Hudson, seconded by Councilman Dorn to transfer \$1,565 from council contingency to the fuel site account for the purchase of a new pump. Motion carried unanimously.

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Supplemental Agenda / Planning Commission Appointment

Two vacancies (at-large) have been created on the Planning Commission Board which are two-year terms. Jeff Hughes was serving as an at-large and his term was up in November 2007 and opted not to be reappointed. Councilman Kitchens recommended Wayne Miller to council to fill this vacancy.

Councilman Bright made the motion, seconded by Councilman Dorn, to appoint Wayne Miller to a two year term (Nov. 2007-Nov. 2009) on the Edgefield County Planning Board. Motion carried unanimously. A second name will be submitted to council at the March meeting to fill the other vacancy.

Administrator's Report

Our Planning Commission will be updating the county comprehensive plan. A series of meetings will be held, beginning in March, to discuss various topics pertaining to the county: housing, transportation, natural resources, community facilities, etc. Public input is important at these meetings.

Two Courthouse Security grants have been applied for. It will be several months before the county will have any information on them. The courthouse security committee will be meeting later on this month to further discuss plans for security that has been mandated by the court administration.

Cornerstone (Alcohol & Drug Abuse) serves four counties (Edgefield included). Citizens from each county serve on this board representing their respective county and at the present both seats for Edgefield County are vacant. Mr. Pettigrew stated that members are not appointed by county council but the director of Cornerstone asked the administrator to make this known at the council meeting.

The Edgefield County Alliance met Monday, Feb. 4th. There were about fifty (50) in attendance for the first meeting which is an organization designed to address needs in the retail, commercial institutional, residential, and tourism sectors of the county. In other words, it is to help economic developmental in areas other than industrial or manufacturing. Anyone interested, please come to next meeting which is scheduled for Monday, March 3rd at Pine Ridge Country Club. Breakfast will be served at 7:30 a.m.

No guests.

No one from the public signed to address council but Rev. Melvin Gordon asked to speak. He stated that "I have been talking to Mr. Pettigrew to keep abreast of the development of Northside Park. I would like to hear where we stand at the present."

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The administrator stated that as you know, in 2007, a basketball court was installed and a back-stop fence for the baseball field. As of now, in the Northside Park account, money that has been set aside from PARD funds which are allocated to the different areas of the county totals a little over \$20,000 specifically earmarked for the Northside Park. Mr. Pettigrew said that his understanding is that the next project there is to be a covered picnic shelter with restrooms. The cost estimate for that is about \$40,000. There isn't enough money to proceed with that project but, we do receive PARD funds every year and council also has funds allocated for each district every year. Those funds will continue to accrue until there is enough money for that particular project.

Rev. Gordon asked about the bleachers, and Mr. Pettigrew told him that Ms. Benson with the US Department of Agriculture (Rural Development) has applied for a grant and found one she could apply for that did not require that the county own the property. The majority of grants of this type require the property to be owned by the county. Ms. Benson did find a grant through a foundation that she has already applied for (January). We hope to get a grant for the bleachers so that money that we have can be used for the shelter.

Mrs. Charlene Garrett, member of Women in Unity thanked council for the monetary help they have given to the Women in Unity and also invited council to their annual Valentine's Banquet that helps to finance the group.

Roy Blackwell asked to speak. He spoke concerning county roads that have been destroyed and made impassable by individuals in four-wheel drive trucks and four wheelers. He informed council that he understood from the sheriff the county could pursue charges maybe from the civil standpoint rather than criminal in order have the individuals tearing up the roads pay the county back the funds used to put the roads back in order.

Claims approved:

PAYROLL: 12/31/08 thru 1/13/08

Regular.....\$236,142.99

PAYROLL: 1/14/08 thru 1/27/08

Regular.....\$219,725.75

General Operating.....\$817,610.95

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No Executive Session

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Dorn, seconded by Councilman Bright. Motion carried. The next regular scheduled meeting will be held Tuesday, March 4, 2008, in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter St., Edgefield.

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman

Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman

Norman Dorn, Councilman

Joel D. Hudson, Councilman

B. Everette Kitchens, Councilman

ATTEST

Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council

